



Bridging Research To Client Results

Debra B. Natenshon



Debra is an [influential social sector thought leader and respected expert](#) in organizational management. She guides clients on their “journey to high performance”, as an adaptive consultant, trusted advisor, and culturally aware group facilitator. Debra successfully bridges strategy with practice-based evidence, resulting in [highly effective client engagements](#) and [well-regarded keynotes and workshops](#).

Through her social purpose consultancy, [DBN & Associates, L3C](#), Debra demonstrates integrity and innovation in partnership with motivated leaders to advance their organizational and programmatic results. Her core goal is supporting foundations and nonprofits to define social change based on verifiable results, rather than on well-intentioned activities. Her vision is to translate the urgency of outcomes into the practice of continuous improvement.

For ten years prior to founding DBN & Associates, Debra served as CEO of The Center for What Works, a national nonprofit organization focused on outcome management research, training and consulting. She published [ground-breaking research](#), including the first [nonprofit taxonomy of outcomes](#) with the Urban Institute, launched an eLearning course with Cisco Systems Foundation, and designed nonprofit and foundation effectiveness toolkits with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Debra’s work focuses on a range of human service providers, umbrella organizations, funders and capacity-builders. Recent engagements include a foundation grant-partner capacity building strategy, multi-service agency data integration plan, and agencies in domestic abuse, day school education, older adults, mental health, early childhood education, synagogue strategy, and disabilities. A passionate connector of people, ideas, research, organizations and processes, Debra creates holistic solutions, where others may only see disparate parts. Beyond individual organizations, Debra designs and facilitates cohorts and collaboratives in developing and implementing shared outcome frameworks.

A [Leap Ambassador](#) since 2013, Debra contributes to an international network of collaborative leaders developing resources to define and support high performance organizations. She co-authored the paper, [Small but Mighty](#) to guide small nonprofits and actively contributed to [The Performance Imperative](#) framework and the [Performance Practice](#) self-assessment tool. Debra is also credited with key inputs into numerous products and publications for leading sector-wide organizations.

In volunteer roles, Debra serves on the Program and Advocacy Committee for [New Moms](#), the Strategic Planning Task Force for the [Association of Consultants to Nonprofits](#), and is a referee for the [FIRST Tech Challenge](#). She founded the Chicago professional chapter of [Net Impact](#), and under her leadership, won Professional Chapter of the Year. Debra served on Net Impact’s membership committee to determine global strategy and continues to mentor emerging leaders.

Debra started her career internationally, teaching English in Japan. She then worked in the private sector for [IOR Global Services](#), a cross-cultural training and consulting firm, where she designed and streamlined business processes for Fortune 100 companies. She helped launch a technology start-up in the late 90s, successfully implementing their first corporate client in over 20 countries.

Debra earned a Master of Science in Organizational Management, with a focus on the social sector. She has studied, lived and worked in England, Japan, India, Israel, and Argentina, and she integrates her evolving knowledge of the world to learn, leverage and contribute.

Debra is based in Chicago and gains balance and joy from her husband and three sons.